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### LET'S ALL TRAVEL MICHIGAN

In the wake of the 9-11 terrorist attacks and in the midst of a sluggish national economy, people have redirected how they are spending money under the category of tourism. They are taking more trips by car and van than by plane and going to places closer to home. That could be good news for Michigan, where tourism is the state's second largest industry.

Perhaps that is why, even as the budgets are being debated in Lansing, the Governor is taking time for a bus tour visiting some of Michigan's more attractive vacation destinations in an effort to encourage Michigan families to vacation in Michigan this summer.

Michigan realizes \$12.8 billion a year through revenues received in trips of 50 miles or more. Those monies translate into sales, jobs, wages, and other indirect business taxes. There are also secondary effects, including supplying goods and services to the tourism businesses themselves, i.e., increased sales in linen supplies to hotels. In turn, employees in tourism and these supporting industries spend their income on housing, utilities, groceries and other goods.

My office always orders our full allotment of Michigan Travel Guides to make available to constituents, and we also have information available on camping, fairs, festivals and other state attractions.

If you have not already made plans for your vacation this year, I urge you to consider a vacation within our beautiful state. We offer something for everyone, whether you enjoy hiking, fishing, boating, antique shopping, art fairs or golf. You can find it all in Michigan. You might even consider driving the 1,100-mile Lake Michigan Circle Tour which actually takes you through four states, but the majority of this wonderful shoreline is in Michigan.

Or, perhaps a vacation focusing upon some of Michigan's wonderful history is more to your liking. From a tour of Underground Railroad stops in Washtenaw County, to the State Capitol and Museum, on to the Gerald R. Ford Museum, then to the Saugatuck and Sleeping Bear Dunes across the "Mighty Mac" to the Museum of Ojibwa Culture in St. Ignace with stops at some of Michigan's beautiful lighthouses along the way, one can bask not only in our state's beauty but also in its proud heritage.

If swimming, fishing or boating is your thing, you will find plenty to do along the shores of the state with the most miles of coastline, whether it be one of the Great Lakes or one of the thousand of inland lakes found within our boundaries. Michigan's golf courses rival any in the country in their beauty, and arts and crafts festivals can be found in each of the state's 83 counties. There is truly something for everyone!

So, as you think of how you will spend your leisure time this summer, think of Michigan. The dollars you spend in your own state go toward Michigan roads and Michigan schools. They create jobs for Michigan residents who, in turn, spend money in Michigan and stimulate the state economy. Instead of wringing our hands about how tight budgets are and waiting for the national economy to turn around, each of us as Michigan residents can do a small part to stimulate growth here at home - in our wonderful Wolverine State.

By Senator Bev Hammerstrom  
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